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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 SAN SALVADOR 000063

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/DSS/OSAC

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [KSAC](#)

SUBJECT: ANNUAL OSAC CRIME/SAFETY REPORT - EL SALVADOR

REF: 02 STATE 2615

1. The following is El Salvador's OSAC report for CY-2005.

Overall Crime and Safety Situation: A General Overview of the Crime and Safety Threats Facing Americans in El Salvador.

El Salvador is one of the most violent countries in the world. There is an average of ten murders and three car jackings reported daily to the Violent crime remains a critical concern and directly affects the U.S. community (Post is aware of at least a half dozen U.S. citizen homicide U.S. enterprises and citizens are not specifically targeted by criminals, neither are they exempt from the threat. The majority of American Bu In 2001 and 2002 economically motivated kidnapping for ransom had been a serious concern. However, according to official police statistics, thi This represents a significant decrease from the numbers reported during 2002, 114 and 2001, 115 respectively.

Still, security experts and professional hostage negotiators estimate that as few as 1 in 10 kidnappings are reported to police due to fear of Homicide remains one of the country's leading crime problems with an average of ten murders daily. El Salvador has one of the highest per capi Professional criminal gangs specialize in armed robberies and burglaries, hijacking of freight trucks, buses and private vehicles, extortion an A country of 6 million people, El Salvador has 309 known street gangs totaling 16,000 members (estimates vary on actual numbers from as few as Rape is a serious problem in El Salvador. There were 910 rapes reported to the National Police in 2005. Local police and judicial experts est While the police have made significant improvements in reducing kidnapping and bank robbery rates, homicides, extortion and armed robberies inc Home invasions continue to be a concern in El Salvador. However, there has been very little media attention and no significant increase in thes Due to lax customs enforcement and porous borders, weapons are readily available and easily obtained by criminals, gangs and just about anyone

The Threat from Political Violence (Terrorism) or Civil Unrest

There are no known indigenous or international terrorist group that operate within El Salvador. Since the end of the civil war in 1992, the grc The threat from transnational terrorism, or transnational narco-terrorism cannot be ruled out, however. The Government of El Salvador has publ Public demonstrations against the Government of El Salvador, generally by government employees and social organizations, are not uncommon. Mos The most recent protests are related to Public Health Care concerns, the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), and wages. Most of the

Other Security and Safety Concerns in El Salvador

A contributing factor to crime in well to do neighborhoods is the unimpeded development of squatter slums in the midst of some of the best neig Public transportation is exceptionally risky, for both security and safety reasons. Passengers on public busses are frequently robbed or pickf U.S. Citizens using banking services should be vigilant and cautious while conducting their financial transactions either inside local banks or Visitors to El Salvador should use caution when climbing volcanoes or hiking in remote areas. Armed robberies of climbers and hikers are comm

A General Assessment of the Police in El Salvador and a Listing of Emergency Telephone Numbers

The National Civilian Police (PNC) was created in 1992 as part of the Peace Accords following the civil war. To bolster broad-based support fc The PNC is still in the developmental stages of becoming a modern and effective police operation that can protect the public. The PNC's invest On January 1, 2006, a new National Civilian Police Director was named and he was sworn in on January 4, 2006. Many here are hoping that he wil U.S. citizen residents or travelers detained by the police should insist on speaking to the Embassy. Arrested or otherwise detained foreigners

Telephone Numbers

Public Safety Emergencies in El Salvador, dial "911"

For reporting suspicious activities in El Salvador dial "122"

1A. National Civilian Police Contact Information

-Metropolitan Investigation Division (503) 2254-8600

-Public Security Division (503) 2222-1304, 2254-7700

1B. Fire Department Contact Information

- Fire Department Headquarters (503) 2271-2227

1C. U.S. Private Security Companies Which Provide Uniformed Guard, Executive Protection, and/or Investigative Services

-Wackenhut of El Salvador (503) 2500-6285

-Spirit of Central America (503) 2243-1275

-OMNI (503) 2271-4786

-Rivaprosa S.A. de C.V. (503) 2243-4287, 2243-2083

Medical Services in El Salvador and A Listing of Emergency Numbers

Medical care is limited. Emergency services, even in the capital city, are very basic. Although many physicians in San Salvador are U.S.- tra

Medical Emergency Contact Information

-Diagnostic Hospital (503) 2226-5111, 2264-4422

-Women's Hospital (503) 2263-5111

-Red Cross Ambulance (503) 2288-1826

-Green Cross - (503) 2242-5735

-Air Ambulance (305) 535-7380 (World Access Transport

Services, Mount Sinai Hospital, Miami Beach Florida)

Recommended Security Precautions for U.S. Visitors to El Salvador

11. Always remain alert to your surroundings. Research recent crime trends prior to planning your trip.
12. Avoid travel into the downtown area unless absolutely necessary.
13. Leave your expensive jewelry and watches at home. If confronted by an armed assailant and he/she demands your property - comply.
14. Leave valuables and important documents in a secure location at your office or in a hotel safe deposit box.
15. Avoid public transportation, including the local busses. There are almost daily reports of robberies involving inter-city buses and to a l
16. Always drive with your vehicle doors locked and windows up.
17. Try to park in a secure area whenever possible. At stores, restaurants and other locations with uniformed guards, try to park near the g
18. Be alert to your surroundings when entering or leaving a parking area, including private residences.
19. Check your vehicle before entry. Ensure no one is hidden inside.
110. Do not leave valuables in your vehicle, anything left visible in your vehicle may appear inviting to petty criminals.
111. Do not drive outside the capital after dark, for both personal security and traffic safety reasons.
112. When traveling to rural areas, try to travel with a large group and more than one vehicle whenever possible.
113. Avoid unpaved roads. These are indicators of areas where police presence may be minimal.
114. Use caution when traveling or spending the night in an isolated or rural area. Telephone communication may be non-existent or erratic.
115. Schedule trips on the highway between San Salvador the Comalapa International Airport during daylight hours. The highway is dangerous, especially at night.

Contact Numbers for Further Information

U.S. Embassy, San Salvador, El Salvador

- 24 hour number: (503) 501-22253
- Regional Security Office: extension 2262
- Consular Section, American Citizens Services Unit: extension 2628

American Chamber of Commerce in El Salvador

- Phone (503) 2263-9494
- Fax (503) 2263-9393

The American Chamber of Commerce sponsors an active local OSAC Country Council that meets on a ad hoc basis. The OSAC Country Council frequent
Travelers may also review OSAC security information posted on the Embassy's website, www.usinfo.org.sv.
Barclay